



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Anne Sullivan School

Public / Middle School 238

**1633 East 8th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11223**

Principal: Harla Musoff-Weiss

Dates of review: December 11 - 12, 2006

Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Anne Sullivan School, Public/Middle School 238, is located in the Midwood section of Brooklyn. The principal took over leadership of the building for school year 2005/006.

The present enrollment of 585 students in pre-kindergarten through 8th grade is 30% White, 12% Black, 38% Hispanic and 19% Asian. Twenty-one percent of the student population are English language learners. There are 15% special education students, many of whom have severe disabilities and take part in the New York State Alternate Assessments. Thirteen percent, which is above the average of similar and City-wide schools, are newly arrived students, mainly from Mexico and Pakistan. The school's Title I eligibility of 79% is above the average of similar and City-wide schools. The attendance rate of 93% matches that of similar schools and is above the average for City-wide schools.

The school has a declining enrollment and recently had to dissolve one of the two second grade classes and create a bridge class for first and second graders. In addition, some students leave at the start of the 6th grade for specialized programs elsewhere. At the same time, students from other elementary schools out of the immediate vicinity who are zoned for MS 238 enter in the 6th grade.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals are highly visible and have a true commitment to running a successful and high-achieving school.
- The school collects, reviews, and uses data effectively in designing instructional programs.
- The principal provides good opportunities for all staff to participate in professional development in school and within the region.
- The school creates opportunities for students to be involved in instructional programs that provide remediation and enrichment as well as the mandated curriculum.
- The principal sets a tone of collegiality and high expectations that is shared with the entire school community.
- Teachers create learning environments and experiences that engage students.
- The school accurately recognizes areas of strengths and weakness, constantly revisits issues and implements changes where necessary.
- The principal maximizes use of funds to support all facets of school programs.
- The school provides opportunities for parents to become learners, support their children, and be recognized as valued members of the school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Compare performance data on the achievement of groups of students to track performance and progress, and design interventions as necessary to meet specific needs.
- Continue to develop teachers' skills in differentiating instruction to meet the learning needs of students, particularly higher achievers.
- Build on the good work in professional development to encourage all teachers to participate fully to develop skills and share good practice.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The school's mission statement 'through the collaboration of the school community dedicated to achieving high levels of academic performance for all of our students' is exemplified by the instructional program and the dedicated team of administrators, teachers, and support staff. The principal and her two assistant principals work collaboratively to create an environment that supports learning and welcomes parents. They are eager to support change that will encourage others to want to become part of their school community.

The school is supporting its changing school population by the extensive use of data to identify specific student needs and by providing appropriate academic interventions and instructional programs. The school provides opportunities that support students' personal as well as academic development.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school's collection, review and use of data are of a high standard. The principal has created a committee of staff members and administrators who are involved in 'going deep' into the data to review student achievement. Students' standardized results are reviewed for performance level and scaled score. The school is addressing the need to move students' performance both within and between levels.

Results from the State test for the English language learners identify students in need of additional support who are now in after-school and Saturday programs. Additionally, the school uses a wide range of test results for reading and mathematics, all of which provide information for teachers to help drive instruction. The results from a student assessment from an early childhood reading program provided teachers with student-specific data enabling them to design appropriate instructional strategies.

Monitoring students' results is a key focus of the school. Information from interim assessments, and pre- and post-assessment tests from the literacy and mathematics instructional programs, is used by teachers to drive instruction. Computer-generated report cards provide summary reports that are carefully reviewed to monitor student progress.

While the school is doing better on the standardized assessments compared to similar schools, the disaggregated data shows a lower number of students performing on level 4, and some students who are not making adequate progress. This underachievement has been identified as an area for improvement and is being addressed by reviewing student-specific data on standardized assessments to monitor performance and progress.

The collection and analysis of data are thorough for individuals. The school also uses the outcomes of tests and assessments to examine the performance of different classes and grades, and to compare overall performance with that of similar schools. However, there is less emphasis on examining the performance of various groups, for example, by ethnicity, and using this data to devise specific interventions to meet the needs of these students.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The administration’s emphasis is on understanding where they are as a learning community and identifying where they want to be and what needs to be done to achieve it, as reflected in the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan. Data is provided to all teachers and used in designing and implementing programs and setting goals at individual student, class and grade level. Faculty conferences, regularly scheduled grade meetings, instructional team meetings, and professional development sessions are all opportunities to review the data collaboratively and gain a greater understanding of how to accelerate student progress.

Academic intervention services are scheduled during the day for those students in greatest need of improvement, identified through data analysis. Personal intervention plans outline instruction and enable staff to monitor progress and plan next steps for each student. During the extended day program, small groups of mandated and at-risk students receive literacy and mathematics support using instructionally-appropriate materials. Teachers work with their own students, matching instruction to students’ learning needs and making them aware of what is expected of them. They enjoy having opportunities to engage in learning activities and feel better prepared for the upcoming tests. These groupings are flexible according to the needs of students.

At monthly elementary grade conferences, teachers focus on academic programs, identify interventions, review progress and discuss student-specific concerns. Middle school grade conferences allow teachers from across the curriculum areas to share instructional strategies while discussing student needs. The coaches are part of all meetings and provide in-class and out-of-class teacher support. Data is constantly being reviewed to drive these conversations and to plan for instruction linked with the established goals.

Parents are viewed as an integral part of the school community. They are actively engaged in the parent teacher association and school leadership team. The parent coordinator is very highly regarded by the parents. The parents feel they are well informed, know how their children are doing and what they are aiming for. They are supported by, and supportive of, the teachers. An adult English class brings in parents three times a week and has had as many as fifty participants. Not only are they learning to speak and read English, they are also learning how to help their children at home.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

In addition to the mandated curriculum, the school uses intervention programs that target the needs of all learners. Rubrics, including those for accountable talk, are visible in each classroom. 'Where is the individual student in their learning?' and 'How can we differentiate instruction to help move them on?' are constant questions being posed by teachers.

Grouping of students according to needs is now part of classroom methodology. Paraprofessionals are trained to support instruction and work with small groups of students using intervention programs. The literacy and mathematics coaches are actively involved in working closely with teachers to develop instructional strategies and interventions. However, teachers are not yet fully proficient in interpreting student data to enable them to select appropriate instructional materials to meet individual students' needs.

In addition to mandated content areas, the school has initiated instrumental music offering students opportunities to become proficient in the guitar, keyboard, and/or violin. There is also a well established art program and evidence of students actively engaged in creating works of art. The students are encouraged to be active learners. A literature circle enables them to visit a local book store with the principal. The students select, read, and discuss books of interest in small groups. In addition, a hobby period during which students and teachers are matched to interests provides for good enrichment activities.

Students know there are high expectations of them and while they say that teachers 'keep us in check', they feel learning is fun. They also know who they can turn to if they have a problem or a concern. This year there are plans for some teachers to act as case managers to provide additional support for identified at-risk students so that these students will know they have a 'go to' person.

Funds are allocated based on a thorough examination of relevant information and are used well to support the school's instructional goals. To better meet the needs of students, the principal has purchased a well-appointed kitchen facility to become a school offering the culinary arts. Informed decisions are also made about staffing and scheduling. For example, certified teachers are hired on a part-time basis for major subject instruction, thus providing opportunities for flexibility in programming.

Although rates of attendance match those of similar schools, the principal is striving for improvement. Visits and calls to the homes of absentees are supporting this effort.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The exemplary management of the school ensures that it runs on well-oiled wheels on a day-to-day basis. The principal is respected by staff, students and parents. The staff includes many senior members who express their delight at the collegiality and support in the building. They share the school's vision, bring a high level of professionalism to the

building and contribute to its smooth running. Because of the falling enrolment, there have been few opportunities to hire staff in the recent past. However, the principal ensures that newer staff feel very welcome and valued and does all she can to maximize their strengths. The school has effective systems to identify and evaluate professional development activities. The principal also encourages and enables teachers to attend professional activities in the region. Understanding how best to collect and use data is given a high priority in the school's professional development program. Most teachers are appreciative of all opportunities to hone their instructional skills. However, professional development sessions are optional, and not all teachers take full advantage of these opportunities.

Observations, both formal and informal, are part of the school culture and classrooms are visited frequently by administrators to ensure good instruction and student engagement. A seven-period day, implemented this year, allows for greater flexibility in the school's schedule. A common meeting time for grade level teachers' is supporting the implementation of new instructional initiatives. These meetings enable teachers to plan the introduction of new reading strategies, provide time for classroom intervisitations, and opportunities to debrief.

The school has developed effective partnerships with a good range of external agencies and local institutions. Youth development staff are involved in the whole-school program and provide intervention services to students as well as support for 8th graders applying to high school.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school is constantly evaluating structures and planning, and implementing newly-identified initiatives to address the instructional, social and emotional needs of each student. Data is constantly reviewed to ensure that no student is overlooked. Conferences with administrators and coaches, as well as grade meetings, enable teachers to constantly revisit the progress of students.

The principal is alert to external professional data. In response to research showing that middle school students do not feel ownership in school, she initiated a 'nesting' structure. This allows the middle school students to remain in their classrooms at the same desk for the major subjects. The classrooms are set up so that supplies are available and sections given to appropriate subject area work. The impact has been a safer environment and students are happy having a place of their own.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a collaborative effort and undergoes constant review and revision. Both short- and long-term goals are integral to the plan. The principal is working collaboratively with a team to review the school's mission to match the changing needs of the school population.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Anne Sullivan School (PS/MS 238)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X